

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently Amended) A production method of a silica-containing rubber composition, including:

a step (A) ~~[[for]]~~ of mixing rubber latex and aqueous silica dispersions and obtaining a mixture of the rubber latex and silica;

a step (B) ~~[[for]]~~ of co-coagulating the rubber in said mixture and silica and obtaining slurry of silica-containing rubber crumbs;

a step (C) ~~[[for]]~~ of filtering said slurry and obtaining rubber crumbs ~~having so as to have~~ a moisture content of 40 wt% or more to 80 wt% or less;

a step (D) ~~[[for]]~~ of dehydrating said filtered rubber crumbs by using a ~~dehydrator~~ an extruding machine having a barrel provided with a screw therein and having a compression function after temporarily making an inner pressure of the barrel of said extruding machine higher than that at a normal operation; and

a step (E) of drying said dehydrated rubber crumbs.

10-11. (Cancelled)

12. (Currently Amended) The production method of a silica-containing rubber composition as set forth in claim ~~[[11]]~~ 9, wherein a part or all of a crumb outlet of said extruding machine is temporarily blocked on an initial or middle stage of an operation of said extruding machine.

13. (Original) The production method of a silica-containing rubber composition as set forth in claim 12, wherein a part or all of the crumb outlet is blocked by filling substance in said extruding machine.

14. (Original) The production method of a silica-containing rubber composition as set forth in claim 13, wherein those including at least one of rubber, resin and ice are used as said filling substance.

15. (Original) The production method of a silica-containing rubber composition as set forth in claim 9, wherein said dehydrated rubber crumbs are dried by a depressurizing operation or/and a heating operation.

16. (Original) The production method of a silica-containing rubber composition as set forth in claim 9, wherein said dehydrated rubber crumbs are dried by a compressing operation and a decompression operation.